

**SUMMARY OF COMMENTS MADE BY
REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AT THE PRESENTATION OF
THE DRAFT UDOT AND MPO LONG RANGE
TRANSPORTATION PLANS ON
MARCH 21, 2007**

As part of the update process for the unified long range transportation plans for UDOT, the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC), the Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG), the Cache Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO) and the Dixie Metropolitan Planning Organization, the combined transportation planning agencies presented their respective draft long range plans to representatives from area federal, state and local government agencies with special emphasis on natural resource agencies. The transportation planning agencies were seeking input on the proposed plans and any perceived conflicts or needed mitigation measures that should be examined. Their comments are as follows:

Lucy Jordan, United States Fish and Wildlife Service

- Ms. Jordan requested that the various agencies be provided with the maps of the proposed long range transportation plans as soon as possible in the process in order to determine if there are resource conflicts with proposed projects.
- Avoidance of a conflict is the first option, minimization of the conflict is the second option and mitigation is the third option.
- We should think of ways to allow wildlife into our lives.
- The best rights-of-way for future transportation projects with the fewest conflicts should be secured now because the impacts are often greater when we wait and are forced to take less desirable rights-of-way because development has precluded our options.
- Has the issue of east/west road widening been included in the Mountain View Corridor EIS? Have these corridors been looked at for wetlands conflicts? How will these routes affect school bus service?
- Greater dependence on public transit would minimize the need for new roads.
- Often highway alternatives considered for federal funding are stopped because of resource conflicts so the project is shelved and built at a later time with local funds.
- The south west corner of the State is a biological hot spot with many threatened or endangered plant and animal species. The Fish and Wildlife Service has very significant concerns with certain proposed roads in the area and would like to work with the Dixie MPO and UDOT to minimize these conflicts. This is especially true of the so called 'western and northern corridors.'
- The eastern shore of the Great Salt Lake is also an important ecosystem for migratory birds and should be considered in any area transportation master plan.
- Every effort should be made to minimize crossing and fragmentation of ecosystems. Bridges, for example, must allow for proper flood plain usage.

- In the Mountain View Corridor in Utah County, there are significant concerns that certain wetlands are being separated from Utah Lake and the larger ecosystem.
- Native plants and other foliage meant to upgrade the aesthetics of highway projects often attract wildlife. This is a clear safety problem for motorists and negatively affects wildlife populations. There are desirable plants available that do not attract large numbers of wildlife.
- The MPO's and UDOT need to agree on a common format for their maps and other publications. The different formats can be confusing, especially to lay members of the public.

Cory Jensen, Utah State Division of History

- There is a data base available showing historic and pre-historic resources. It will be online this summer in Access format and should be available later this year in ArcView GIS format. It could be used as an overlay to show and avoid any resource conflicts.
- Avoidance of the conflict should be the first choice.

Dave Holdaway, Alpine School District

- Traffic routing during construction should be examined far in advance of any project; especially school bus routing
- Coordination with the school districts prior to any highway construction projects would help minimize these conflicts.

Doug Sakaguchi, Utah State Division of Wildlife Resources

- Every effort should be made to reduce the number of automobile/big game collisions.
- UDOT is helping with this effort by mapping crash locations as they pick up animals along the roadside.
- Currently, UDOT is using 8' fences to protect against wildlife encroachment with one way ramps to allow escape for those animals that do get inside the perimeter.
- The DWR is also working with UDOT to identify structures that help animals to avoid conflicts.
- Problems should be identified early in the process so they can be avoided or mitigated.

Carmen Bailey, Utah State Division of Wildlife Resources

- The Division has established key conservation focus areas and wetlands and is also working to restore other areas. The data is in GIS format now and may be shared with interested agencies. A GIS overlay of these data with transportation master plans would be useful in identifying potential conflicts.

Bruce Bonebrake, Utah State Division of Wildlife Resources

- Wildlife habitat connectivity is an issue when roads cut across an area.
- This is also a safety issue as much as a loss of big game issue.
- The Utah Transportation Research Advisory Council at USU will be studying specific structures over the next two years for effectiveness in allowing big game to cross transportation facilities. This information would be useful in future highway planning.
- UDOT will participate in a workshop on I-70 to identify big game focus areas, especially the first seven miles.
- St. George field office personnel should be included in any planning that will affect the desert tortoise and prairie dogs.
- Exclusion fences will help reduce kill rates for these small animals.

Mark Breitenbach, Central Utah Water Conservation District

- Maps of large, proposed water projects and pipelines should be superimposed over the draft transportation plans to identify any conflicts.
- The Springville project will begin this fall and the project from 800 North in Orem to Eagle Mountain is currently underway.

Alan Packard, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District

- The alignment for the pipeline to bring water from the Bear River into the Salt Lake area is mostly established. That alignment should be considered as part of the WFRC transportation planning effort. *Note—Wasatch Front Regional Council staff will meet with Mr. Packard to evaluate this alignment.

Robert Powell, U.S. Forest Service

- SAFETEA-LU requires consultation with land management agencies for transportation master plans. Special consideration should be given to issues of big game crossings and invasive species.
- A similar meeting is being set up in the State of Wyoming to discuss these issues on a state wide basis and may serve as a prototype.

Shelly Quick, Utah State Division of Water Quality

- Use of established best management practices can be used to mitigate issues of rainwater carrying pollutants off roadways.
- Additional efforts to address impaired groundwater sources are especially needed.
- The Division of Water Quality would like to work with the transportation planning agencies to pursue solutions to these issues. A letter from the agency listing best management practices would be welcome according to George Ramjoue, WFRC Planning Manager.

Dan Fazzini, Salt Lake County Bicycle and Safe Routes to School Advisory Committee

- Re-routing bicycles during construction is a problem. There is often little or no room for bicyclists and pedestrians between the traffic lane and the orange barrels.
- Special consideration should be given to this problem when school children riding their bicycles to school are at issue.
- East/west facility improvements were needed years ago with or without the Mountain View Corridor.

Mike Olsen, Intermountain Health Care in Utah County

- Emergency services managers need to be made aware of construction projects in advance in order to re-route emergency vehicles.
- East/west travel in northern Utah County is a major problem.
- The planned highway projects need to proceed as soon as possible and not be held up by litigation.

Dave Creer, Utah Trucking Association

- UDOT has been doing a good job of construction project notification. Mr. Creer receives almost an e-mail per day which he is able to forward to area trucking companies.
- A bypass road west of Utah Lake would be helpful in avoiding the heavily congested areas on I-15.

Susan Zarekarizi, Utah State Division of Parks and Recreation

- 4(f) conflicts need to be identified in the transportation master plans. They are not currently available in GIS format. They are available in an Excel spreadsheet.
- Local park managers should be contacted before planning area highway projects.
- The Snow Canyon area near St. George is rated as 6(f) for desert tortoises and should be avoided.

Todd Adams, Utah State Division of Water Resources

- Low water use landscaping should always be considered.

Ralph Bond, Utah State Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste

- It is not safe to assume that material torn up from old highway projects is clean. It needs to be looked at for contamination and disposed of appropriately.